BRITISH COLUMBIA

NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release
2002FOR0089-000989
May 1, 2002

Ministry of Forests
B.C. Forest Service
Cariboo Fire Centre

$50,000 REWARD OFFERED FOR INFORMATION ON ARSONISTS

– A $50,000 reward is being offered for information leading to the arrest and conviction of arsonists who have set fires in dry, grassy meadows near the communities of Anahim Lake and Nimpo Lake in the past 10 days.

Jobs and businesses were threatened last week when a fire burned to the edge of West Chilcotin Forest Products sawmill. These fires are destroying rangeland, as the fires burn deep in the peat, removing the humus base of the meadowlands.

The British Columbia Forest Service is asking the public to help identify the people responsible. Anyone with information about any of these suspicious fires in the Anahim Lake and Nimpo Lake areas is asked to call the Anahim Lake RCMP detachment at 1-250-742-3211 or the Forest Service's Anahim Cabin at 1-250-742-3270. The Forest Service works with RCMP investigators on suspicious fires and hopes the reward will encourage the public to be aware and report anything they might see or know about deliberately ignited fires.

Arson is an offence under the Criminal Code of Canada and is punishable by a fine or prison sentence of up to 14 years.

- 30 -

Visit the province's Web site at http://www.gov.bc.ca/ for online information and services.

Media contact: Diane Toopitsin
Fire Information Officer
Cariboo Fire Centre
250 989-2600